DISCUSSIONS AND COMMENTS

Forum on *'Urban Anthropology'*

Anthropological research in urban settings – often referred to as 'urban anthropology', for short – and its attendant ethnographically-based findings are increasingly attracting attention from anthropologists and non-anthropologists alike, including other professionals and decision-makers. In view of its growing importance, this Issue of *Urbanities* carries a Forum on the topic, which we hope will be of interest to our readers. This Forum opens with the reproduction of an essay by Giuliana B. Prato and Italo Pardo recently published in the UNESCO Encyclopaedia EOLSS, which forms the basis for the discussion that follows in the form of comments and reflections by a number of scholars, in alphabetical order. This special section of *Urbanities* closes with a brief Report on a round-table Conference on 'Placing Urban Anthropology: Synchronic and Diachronic Reflections' held last September at the University of Fribourg and the transcript of the Address given by the Rector of that University during the Conference.

'Urban Anthropology'[1]

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Established academic disciplinary distinctions led early anthropologists to study tribal societies, or village communities, while ignoring the city as a field of research. Thus, urban research became established in some academic disciplines, particularly sociology, but struggled to achieve such a status in anthropology. Over the years, historical events and geo-political changes have stimulated anthropologists to address processes of urbanization in developing countries; yet, urban research in western industrial societies continued to be left out of the mainstream disciplinary agenda. In this chapter we examine major debates in the development of this sub-discipline and discuss the complex methodological and theoretical challenges posed by field-research in urban settings, clearly identifying the significance of the anthropological paradigm in urban research and its centrality both to mainstream academic debates and to the broader society. Today an increasing number of anthropologists carry out research in cities. With half of humanity already living in towns and cities, growing to two-thirds in the next 50 years, there is no denying that research in urban settings is topical and needed as western and non-western society is fast becoming urban or mega-urban. Having outlined the background to current trends in this field of research, the discussion builds towards an assessment of the contribution that empirically-based anthropological analysis can make to our understanding of our increasingly urban world.

Keywords: cities' diversity, ethnographic methodology, human mobility, regional diversity, space and place, urban research, urbanism, urbanization.

Introduction: Urban Anthropology in the Disciplinary Tradition

Since the 1990s an increasing number of academic events have focused on urban issues and publications have flourished in this field, its world-wide critical importance unmistakably testified by the establishment of the permanent UN-World Urban Forum. In part due to the rapid growth of cities in the twentieth century, such interest in urban research has included significant contributions from anthropologists and yet, for a long time, mainstream anthropologists, especially in the British tradition of social anthropology, had been reluctant to recognize urban settings, particularly in industrialized countries, as legitimate fields of enquiry.

Urban anthropology is a relatively recent new field of study within socio-cultural anthropology. While twentieth-century sociologists paid great attention to the study of cities and urban phenomena, social and cultural anthropologists stayed largely away from this important field of research. One reason for such a choice was rooted in late-nineteenth century disciplinary divisions, identifying social and cultural anthropology as principally concerned with the comparative study on non-Western societies and cultures. To simplify, until relatively recently, following academic classification, anthropology focused on so-called 'primitive' societies (otherwise described as 'tribal', 'exotic', or 'folk'), whereas Western industrial societies were the

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designated realm of sociological enquiry. Thus, until the 1970s, urban research remained associated mainly with sociology.

Although for many years anthropologists had conducted research in urban areas, especially in African and Latin American countries, only in the late 1960s did the anthropological establishment cautiously begin to acknowledge the relevance of such research. The 1970s saw the publication of several books and articles, as anthropologists became engaged in debating the conceptual and theoretical definition of 'urban' and the extent to which 'urban' anthropology differed from 'traditional' anthropology. Such a debate never ceased. Both the definition of urban and the very definition of urban anthropology are thorny issues that continue to be the objects of academic dispute. For some, urban anthropology is 'simply' (more or less classical) anthropological research carried out *in* urban areas; others endeavor to define the city as a specific 'social institution' with its dynamics and social, economic and political relations, thus maintaining that urban anthropology is anthropology *of* the city.

However defined, the emergence of urban anthropology, and its growing strength, can reasonably be seen as a consequence of historical events, for its development has been intrinsically linked to worldwide geo-political changes and to their impact on the discipline as a whole. Today more than ever, this is unmistakably the case. Over several decades, varying, though more often than not fast processes of urbanization in so-called tribal societies and the crisis of European colonialism have posed new challenges to anthropologists who began to turn their attention to Western industrial societies, the (improperly) so-called 'complex societies'. In brief, for us to understand what it exactly is and what it studies, this sub-field must be contextualized within the tradition of socio-cultural anthropology, taking appropriately into account the disciplinary and paradigmatic changes that have occurred at key historical junctures.

In order to clarify such a context and the attendant changes, the following sections offer brief examinations of significant cross-disciplinary theoretical influences; of the early anthropological interest in processes of urbanization and of the consequent development of 'urban anthropology', including influences from cognate disciplines. Then, the discussion moves on to outlining key methodological issues and new developments in the field of anthropological urban research.

Cross-disciplinary Influences

Before looking at the development of urban anthropology, we need to address the underlying theoretical, mainly sociological, influences. Early anthropological theorizations on the specificity of urban life, institutions and social relations reflected the classical sociological framework developed in the industrial society of the nineteenth century. Most of such analyses were based on the assumption that there was a sociologically significant distinction between urban and rural (and, more generally, non-urban) life. Notable among the sociological classics is Ferdinand Tönnies's work on Community (*Gemeinschaft*) and Society (*Gesellschaft*), published in 1887 (Tönnies 2002 [1887]), which established a distinction between the feudal community,

characterized by intimate relations and collective activities, and the capitalist society, characterized by impersonal relations and contractual bonds. On a similar line, in his work on *Suicide* (1951 [1897]), Emile Durkheim introduced the concept of *anomie* to argue that anomic suicide occurred among those who lived in impersonal settings, such as modern cities. More generally, anthropologists appear to have been influenced by the nineteenth century sociologists' view of the city as a fragmenting, rather than unifying place; that is, a place of greater freedom and opportunities for the individual but also a place of isolation, conflict and bureaucratization of all aspects of life (see, for example, Simmel 1990 and Weber 1958). Most interestingly, especially in view of North American anthropologists' interest in urban research, de Tocqueville's analysis of *Democracy in America* (1945), in which he described the expanding US urban areas as places of identity that transcended social division, was virtually ignored by both urban anthropologists and urban sociologists.

Initially, alongside classical sociological works, anthropologists were strongly influenced by the production of what became known as the Chicago School of Urban Ecology (for short, the 'Chicago School'), bringing together urban sociologists who worked under the leadership of Robert Ezra Park at the University of Chicago. This group of scholars basically drew on the conceptualization of cities as ecosystems segmented in 'natural areas' (Park, Burgess and McKenzie eds 1925), which included 'ordinary' neighbourhoods and slums and ghettos for immigrants and African Americans. According to the Chicago School's approach, these areas were subject to laws of residential succession; thus, a major aim was to study changing residential patterns as part of the broader investigation of cities' 'social problems'. The research methods adopted by these scholars reflected such a broad interest, focusing on historical evidence, interviews and, especially, quantitative demographic and statistical material. This kind of quantitative empiricism was rejected by a new generation of sociologists who instead favoured a more qualitative 'ethnographic method'; they became the most influential inspiration to anthropologists. Their production is exemplified by Carolyn Ware's *Greenwich Village, 1920-1930* (1935) – on the incorporation of Greenwich Village into New York and the process by which it maintained its distinctive character; William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1955 [1943]) – a study of an Italian neighbourhood, in which he applied the classical anthropological method of participant observation; and W. Lloyd Warner's *Yankee City* (1963) – a study of a New England city, which combined an ethnographic perspective with formal interviews.

While the Chicago School influenced the methodological approach of the early anthropologists who worked in urban settings, theorizations of 'urban life' were influenced above all by the work of the sociologist Louis Wirth. In his essay *Urbanism as a Way of Life* (1938), Wirth described the city as a specific 'social institution' with distinctive attributes, which were reflected in the urban physical structure – that is, the urban plan and the city's size – in the urban social organization and in the attitudes and ideas of city-dwellers. According to Wirth, the city's social heterogeneity and population density promoted differentiation and occupational specialization. Therefore, he argued, social relations tended to be impersonal, transitory,

superficial and instrumental. Such a weak social integration would eventually result in anomie. Wirth maintained that, in contrast to rural communities, in a city 'the juxtaposition of divergent personalities and modes of life tends to produce a relativistic perspective and a sense of toleration of differences which may be regarded as prerequisites for rationality and which lead toward the secularization of life' (1938: 15), adding that 'urbanism as a way of life' was not confined to city-dwellers but extended its influence beyond the city's boundaries. His work was later criticized for having focused on a kind of urbanism that was culturally and historically specific to the North American city and to the capitalist economy of his time (see, for example, Fox 1977: 58-9; Hannerz 1980: 68, 74).

Early Anthropological Studies in Urban Areas

In contrast with the received, and for a long time unquestioned, academic division between sociology and socio-cultural anthropology, in the late 1930s, the American anthropologist Robert Redfield (1947) began to carry out field research among peasant city-dwellers. Influenced by the work of the sociologist Wirth (1938), he theorized a 'folk-urban continuum' in which 'folk' societies and 'urban' societies were the two opposite ideal types. Quite unmindful of Raymond Firth's conclusion that the difference between types of economic system is one of degree, not one of kind (Firth 1939: 355), Redfield argued that folk societies consisted of small-scale, isolated and homogeneous communities, had a rudimentary division of labor and were economically self-sufficient. On the basis of research carried out in developing countries, such as India, he went on to suggest that, contrary to folk societies, peasant communities were not isolated, for they were linked, for example, to economic forces outside their own communities. They were, thus, part of a larger social set up, specifically the city and its 'great tradition', as opposed to the 'little' tradition of the small village.

Redfield's work stimulated anthropologists' interest in studying society from the perspective of the city. American anthropologists in particular began to address rural-urban migration in peasant societies without, however, paying sufficient attention to the relevant macro-processes beyond the community under study. Thus, from the 1930s to the 1950s, anthropologists mainly focused on rural migrants in slums and shanty towns in Mexican and other Latin America cities, and on the impact of 'urbanism' on their lives. Richard Fox (1977) aptly criticized these studies pointing out that, following the established anthropological tradition, they focused on small-scale units (minorities or small communities within the cities); an approach that was reflected in these anthropologists' interest in the 'exotic others'. It is in such a context that, heavily influenced by the dominant functionalist methodological paradigm and by the sociology of the Chicago School, still in the 1960s North American-trained anthropologists engaged in problem-centred studies, focusing on minorities, urban adaptation and poverty.

The development of urban anthropology among British social anthropologists was significantly slower and fraught with serious difficulties, notwithstanding the seminal work of Raymond Firth, who in 1947 stimulated members of the Department of Social Anthropology at

the London School of Economics to engage in a study of kinship in a South London borough, which resulted in a an important contribution to the intensive study of modern urban society (Firth 1956; see also Firth, Hubert and Forge 1969). Nonetheless, in the late 1930s the process of urbanization in many African countries caught the attention of British anthropologists. Although research carried out in African cities was not really regarded as *urban* research (Grillo 1985), the Rhodes Livingston Institute, based in the British territory of what was then called Northern Rhodesia, did give a major contribution to urban African studies. The Institute, established in 1937 and initially directed by the British anthropologist Godfrey Wilson, encouraged a relatively large number of young researchers to investigate the social transformations that were occurring in Central Africa, including the process of urbanization. One of the earliest studies was carried out by Godfrey and Monica Wilson on 'detribalization' in Central Africa (see G. Wilson and M. Wilson 1945). In 1941, the appointment of the South-African-born anthropologist Max Gluckman to the directorship of the Institute gave new impetus to research in urban areas. In 1940, Gluckman drafted a 'Seven Year Research Plan' aimed at stimulating research in both rural and urban areas with particular reference to the rural areas affected by the migration of the labour force to the new mining towns. Such intense research activity focused on the mining area known as the Copperbelt and, under Gluckman's leadership, addressed the effects of colonialism on tribal economies and their inclusion in the market, focusing on the different economic structures and the kind of social relations that were emerging in the new urban areas. Significantly, the population of the Copperbelt mining towns was made up mainly by immigrants from the surrounding rural villages, who were employed as cheap labor force. As, according to Gluckman, these urban immigrants had entered a new web of relationships that were believed to be typical of the 'urban system' (1961), anthropological research in these towns was to be regarded as the study of processes of social transformation and of the situations in which such processes took place (Mitchell 1966). The works of Epstein on African politics (1958) and of Mitchell on urban social relations (1957) exemplify this approach.

Until the mid-twentieth century, the research produced by British anthropologists under Gluckman's direction provided the main body of African urban ethnography. Following Gluckman's appointment in 1949 to a Chair in Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester, this group of anthropologists became known as the 'Manchester School'. Soon after, in the 1950s, the Manchester group launched a 'school in urban anthropology', which had a limited impact for, by the late 1960s, the leading scholars who had been engaged in this project had moved on to other fields. It is important to bear in mind that, although such urban anthropology was later criticized for its functionalist approach, it did contribute to the development of new research methods – particularly case- and network-analyses – which are widely regarded its major legacy (see, for example, Mitchell 1966 and Mitchel ed. 1969).

While attention to the city as an important field of anthropological enquiry grew, urban research in Western industrial societies continued to be excluded, particularly though not only in the UK, from the anthropological research agenda. When historical events in the aftermath of the

Second World War and the process of decolonization forced anthropologists to turn their attention to Western society, they were famously encouraged to carry out research in rural villages, not in cities. As Cole (1977) noted, anthropologists focused on processes of modernization in rural European villages, believing that the analysis of these processes would provide a blueprint for an understanding of the changes that were occurring elsewhere in the world. As we have argued elsewhere (Pardo and Prato 2010), the anthropological study of Western society, especially in Europe, contributed to push the discipline backward rather than encouraging its advancement (see also a later section). It can indeed be reasonably argued that, while holding on to the then still dominant functionalist paradigm, anthropology appeared to be rediscovering its nineteenth century evolutionistic roots.

Moreover, those anthropologists who took an interest in the city appeared to see this kind of setting as a new laboratory in which to carry out traditional studies on kinship, on belief and value systems and on small group dynamics. This trend prompted Ulf Hannerz (1980) to question whether urban anthropology did actually have a specific object of study. The key point is that early anthropological studies in cities focused on traditional anthropological topics, thus leading to the study of urban kinship, of ghettoes and slums in shanty town communities, of the perpetuation of folklore and rituals, and so on. Throughout the 1960s, such disciplinary interest focused on new urban residents; urban problems, such as poverty, urban adaptation and ecological factors; the role of dominant social groups; minority communities (the problem-centred approach); and traditional ethnographic studies which looked at the city as a laboratory. The overall, basic focus was rural-urban migration. However, it must be stressed that, notwithstanding their limitations and later criticism, such Anglophone pioneering studies did undoubtedly form the basis for the development of urban anthropology.

The Development of Urban Anthropology
In the 1960s, the worldwide increasing demographic movement to cities led to the expansion of urban anthropological research. With continued attention to 'problem-centred' studies, research focused on poverty, minorities – including ethnic minorities – and on urban adaptation. Some anthropologists who engaged in these studies developed such concepts as 'culture of poverty' (Lewis 1959, 1966), which over the years was fiercely criticized (see, for example, Valentine 1968, Eames and Goode 1996); others focused on ghetto culture and community dynamics (see, for example, Hannerz 1969), on interpersonal networks and collective identities (see, for example, Abu-Lughod 1962) and on the significance of so-called 'quasi-groups' in the context of 'complex societies' (see, for example, A. Mayer 1966). A more eclectic and regionally diversified urban anthropology emerged during the 1970s, as field research was increasingly carried out in Japan, India, South-East Asia and in various African and South and North American countries. Southall's edited volume, titled *Urban Anthropology* (1973), offered an initial insight into the variety of research that was being done at the time, bringing together methodological and ethnographic contributions and a seventy-page bibliography on the topic.

This new interest in urban research stimulated a multidisciplinary symposium on 'Processes of Urbanism' at the IX International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (ICAES) held in Chicago in 1973. The symposium was poorly attended and no further sessions were organized at the following Congress. In the US, given a strong home-oriented tradition, the American Anthropological Association took an interest in anthropological research in urban areas and, in 1972, initiated the publication of the journal *Urban Anthropology*. This initiative did not, however, lead to the establishment of 'urban anthropology' as a sub-disciplinary field. A further attempt was made in 1979 with the foundation of the *Society of Urban Anthropology* (SUA) but endless debate ensued and ostracism continued from 'traditional' anthropologists who believed that urban anthropology was not truly anthropology. So, after an initial, rather enthusiastic start, the relevance of the SUA faltered. Later, as part of the steps taken in the late-1980s in an attempt to revitalize this organization, the Society was renamed SUNTA (*Society for Urban, National and Transnational/Global Anthropology*) and the journal *Urban Anthropology* was renamed under the lengthy title, *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural System & World Economic Development*. A new journal called *City and Society* was also launched.

In spite of the reluctance and, in some cases, outright opposition of the wider anthropological community, in the late 1970s Cyril Belshaw, the then president of the IUAES (International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences), endorsed the establishment of a *Commission on Urban Anthropology* (from now on, CUA) within the IUAES. Ghaus Ansari and anthropologists like Fox and Southall – who had published textbooks and readers on urban anthropology (see, for example, Fox 1977, Southall ed. 1973) – were among the Commission's founding members. As the only international association of anthropology, the IUAES, through the CUA, aimed at promoting the establishment of an international network of scholars engaged in urban research and at stimulating debate on the variety of research identifiable as urban. Ansari was asked to coordinate the preparatory work for the organization of this new Commission and in 1982, following prolonged consultations with specialist anthropologists, the first International Seminar on Urban Anthropology was eventually convened in Vienna. The Seminar was attended by 15 participants from Austria, Canada, Egypt, India, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the USA and Venezuela. The proceedings were published in 1983 in a volume published by Brill and co-edited by Ansari and Nas. Titled *Town-Talk – The Dynamics of Urban Anthropology*, the volume aimed at providing a blueprint for the scientific program of the Commission, which gained full affiliation to the IUAES in 1983, at the Vancouver International Congress.

The CUA has since grown in strength, its membership including scholars based in universities across the world. It holds regularly its thematic Annual Conference and promotes seminars and round-tables, bringing together strong fields of senior and younger anthropologists in discussing their work and debating key issues in this subfield. In recent years, the Commission has published its own web-site (http://urban.anthroweb.net/). Under the chair of Giuliana B. Prato, has established strong links with Ashgate Publishing through the Series *Urban*

Anthropology and, in November 2011, has launched *Urbanities*, its open-access peer-reviewed on-line journal, which endeavours to provide the scientific community and the general public with up-to-date research findings, debates and news in urban anthropology. A key objective of this journal, published twice a year, is to bring out the relevance of this disciplinary sub-field in understanding social, cultural, political and economic changes worldwide.

Defining the 'Urban'

In the 1970s, the socio-economic and geo-political ethnographic variety of expanding urban research generated some confusion on how precisely to define the concept of 'urban'. The urban was defined in terms of demographic density or in relation to occupations other than agricultural or direct subsistence production. Southall (1983) viewed the 'urban' as a highly spatial density of social interaction, rejecting a definition based on mere demographic or physical density. From a Marxist point of view, Gutkind (1983) provided yet another definition arguing, similar to Southall, that it is not physical density that constitutes an urban setting; it is, instead, the kind of social relations, which, according to him, are significantly different from those in rural settings. Gutkind maintained that class struggle constituted the essence of urban life and, like Southall, that the city was a 'social institution' totally different from any other. They were influenced by earlier sociological works, such as Louis Wirth's aforementioned essay, *Urbanism as a Way of Life* (1938) where he described the distinctive attributes of the city as a specific social institution, a view that led to the conceptualization of an anthropology *of* the city, as opposed to anthropological research *in* the city. Having argued that the aim of urban anthropology should be the cross-cultural study of urbanism, Southall (1983) encouraged the comparative analysis of historically established metropolises, taking further an earlier debate on classifications of city types that, like the more recent attempts made in this line (see a later section), bring vividly to mind the spirit of Edmund Leach's robust warning about some anthropologists' tendency to engage in pointless 'butterfly collecting' (Leach 1961: 5). The influence that such attempts have yielded in the history of this subfield makes them, nonetheless, worthy of some attention.

An early attempt at classifying city types was made by Redfield and Singer in their essay, *The cultural Role of Cities* (1954), which expanded on Redfield's theorization of the folk-urban continuum to develop the idea of a continuum with two ideal types of cities at its opposite ends, which they called the 'orthogenetic' city and the 'heterogenetic' city. These two ideal types were supposed to explain the role that cities play in cultural change and transmission. According to Redfield and Singer, 'orthogenetic' cities are the product of endogenous development, a product therefore of 'primary' urbanization. In the context of orthogenetic cities, pre-existing folk ideas and values are transformed by a group of urban literati and transmitted back to the people (folk) among whom they originated. Such a process of elaboration and codification of the folk culture into a 'great tradition', they argued, creates an indigenous civilization. In contrast, they described 'heterogenetic' cities as products of a 'secondary' kind of urbanization; the product, that is, of the encounter between a folk culture and a different (often colonial) culture. In this second case, the

outcome is not the creation of a 'great tradition' of indigenous civilization but a new form of urban life which is often in conflict with the indigenous folk culture. According to Redfield and Singer, heterogenetic cities may well be centres of technical and economic change, but the ideological innovation that accompanies them destroys the ancient tradition and brings about dissent, rootlessness and anomie.

Southall's subsequent classification of African cities played a relevant role in the research carried out in the African ex-colonies. For Southall (1961), African cities fall into either a 'category A' or a 'category B'. Category A includes cities of ancient formation, which existed long before the colonial administration; these are characterized by slow development and maintain strong links with the subsistence economy of the surrounding rural areas. Category B includes cities of recent formation, which are marked by fast growth and are inhabited mainly by rural migrants employed in the mines and industries built and owned by white Europeans. Gluckman joined the debate arguing that towns in Central Africa 'differ only in degree from any town, anywhere in the world' (1961: 79), and that an 'African townsman is a townsman' (1961: 69). With reference to the African towns in the Copperbelt area, Gluckman maintained that these towns' 'social structure is determined by the urban industrial setting', thus 'the starting point for an analysis of urbanization must be an urban system of relations' (1961: 79-80).

These Africanists' approach was interestingly at odds with the analyses developed by scholars who were carrying out research in urban India. In 1960 Pocock published a paper on the Indian city, arguing that Indian cities are above all *Indian* and that many sociological theorizations about the city had erroneously and hastily associated the urban with 'Western values and influences' (Pocock 1960: 65). In a recent essay, Parry (2012) discusses these different approaches suggesting that the divergence between these two main arguments may have developed in part out of different academic agendas. On the one hand, the scholars of the Rhodes Livingston Institute were attempting to distance themselves from colonial stereotypes casting African 'tribesmen' as people who could never truly become 'townsmen'. On the other hand, anthropologists who did research in India were determined to get out from under the shadow of Africanist anthropology, and sought to assert the unique and distinctive character of Indian cities and civilization. However, as Parry points out, there is an objective difference between the two kinds of urbanism addressed by Gluckman and Pocock. Pocock ignored Indian colonial cities in his analysis and mainly referred to cities that had evolved endogenously through millennia and were similar to the 'orthogenetic' cities pictured in Redfield and Singer's model; he wanted to demonstrate that in India there was no discontinuity between rural and urban social life. Stressing India's ancient urban civilization, Pocock endeavored to show that, historically, the Indian city has been the central expression of the traditional social values reflected in the caste and kinship system. Ultimately, his rejection of the urban-rural divide factually questioned the idea that there could be such a distinctive field of study as urban anthropology.

Notwithstanding such an authoritative objection as Pocock's, two main positions emerged in the late 1960s from the described different approaches to urban research. One developed along

the lines sketched by Southall and Gutkind and was espoused by people like Conrad Arensberg (1968), who, in comparing rural and urban life, regarded the city as a totality that should be studied in itself. Arensberg's stance reflected a strong functionalist influence, as he cast urban studies in the methodological framework that he had applied to his research in rural Ireland, which he published with Solan Kimball in 1940. Such functionalism should not come as a surprise, for, as Rosemary Harris pointed out in a key essay published 1988, Arensberg and Kimball acknowledged the influence of Lloyd Warner's study of Yankee City. The other position is well represented by Leeds (1968) who, in contrast with what we have just outlined, argued that the city could not be studied as an isolated unit separated from the wider national and international context. Leeds (1972) made it clear that too much emphasis had been put on micro-level studies, which he regarded as having limited importance in understanding cities. His criticism pointed to two main problems in the way in which 'urban anthropology' had developed. Having argued that urban anthropology 'has been done as if (a) the city were an isolated unit and (b) as if the thing studied in the city has some intrinsic relation to the city,' he concluded that 'cities are simply one form of population nucleation, all of which are precipitates in localities of an extraordinarily complex system of interactions which constitute a society' (Leeds 1972: 4-5). Leeds sought to define theoretical and methodological models that would allow anthropologists to study the 'totality' of the city as part of a wider totality; that is, the state and the global context to which it belongs. Leeds's approach is graphically illustrated by his statement that 'no town is an island of itself' (Leeds 1980; see also Leeds 1973). For him, cities are elements of a complex macrocosm, and such a macrocosm must be taken into account for us to be able to unravel what is going on at the local level. On a parallel line, other anthropologists increasingly realized that cities could not be regarded as subordinate units of centralized states and that urban phenomena should be contextualized in the global system. Richard Fox (1977), for example, emphasized the relevance of including historical analysis in the locally significant global dimension.

Note that, apart from the US, thus far the study of Western industrial societies had remained distinctly missing from the urban anthropological agenda. The increasing difficulty in carrying out 'traditional' anthropological research in the new post-colonial situation had been a turning point in what appeared to be a disciplinary stance against research in the West. As we have mentioned, this was particularly true of British mainstream anthropology. As research in the ex-colonies was increasingly hindered by lack of cooperation from local governments and by the decreasing interest, and therefore funds, in the anthropologists' countries of origin, some anthropologists turned their attention to their own society, leading to a fatuous (Schneider 2002) and damaging (Pardo and Prato 2010) search for the 'exotic at home'.

The Tribalization of Cities: Urban Anthropology and the Functionalist Paradigm
By the early 1980s, three major tendencies had developed in anthropology: 1) the study of the transformations that were occurring in the so-called Third World societies and in developing countries; 2) the study of the anthropologist's own society, the so-called 'anthropology at home';

3) the study of European communities, with particular reference to Celtic and Irish communities and to rural settings in the Mediterranean Region. The latter trend developed especially among Anglophone anthropologists (mainly British and North American). Since the 1960s, there had been a proliferation of Mediterranean ethnographies, particularly on Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal (although, geographically this is not a Mediterranean country), Turkey (in part considered between Europe and the Middle East) and, to a lesser extent, France, for France had its own tradition of anthropology 'at home' (see, for example, Dumont 1951). As such research in rural communities continued to be conceived mainly as the study of small-scale, self-contained societies, a substantial body of anthropological literature was published that provided synchronic accounts of rural villages studied as 'isolated units', no attempt being made to relate these villages to the wider regional and national context to which they belonged. In short, despite the traditional functionalist paradigm having unmistakably proved limited in other ethnographic areas, it continued to be applied particularly to the study of Mediterranean rural villages with a focus on social norms and on the integrating and static aspects of social structure.

About two decades later, a new generation of anthropologists with research interest in Europe began to question this mainstream analytical approach to the study of European rural communities. These critiques were aptly summarized by the U.S.-based British anthropologist Herzfeld (1987), who had conducted research in rural Greece. Herzfeld forcefully argued that, paradoxically, a discipline that claimed to reject exoticism (in the sense of sensationalizing cultural otherness), had in fact pursued the study of cultural otherness. Most important, Herzfeld pointed out that the focus on the village had obscured the complex web of relations between local and national political and economic dynamics. The structural-functionalist paradigm still dominant in the 1970s had brought about a heavily criticized tendency (see, for example, Albera1988) to tribalise and isolate in space and time the society under study, and to seek out the marginal. Such criticism mirrored that raised against the kind of urban anthropological approach that focused on group dynamics and community studies. As Fox wittily noted, at its early stage, urban anthropology appeared to be caught in an undignified scuffle to find savages in the slums (1977).

It is important to remind the reader that 'urban anthropology' was developing parallel to the study of the anthropologist's own society. It is equally important to note that when anthropologists began to turn their attention to 'home', their interest was, in a sense, of an applied kind. They were interested in studying the 'problems' of their own society and contributing to planning social intervention aimed at the solution of such problems. For these anthropologists the Western metropolis constituted a breeding field of the society's problems. From this perspective, the city was conceived as a mosaic, in which each piece presented different problems. Their approach did not contemplate the study of the whole set up; instead, it focused merely on the observation and analysis of each part separately from the others, as advocated by the Chicago School and its followers in the USA. The School's influence on anthropological urban research raised animated debate and criticism – particularly directed to its focus on small-scale social units

– which continue to these days. Hannerz, who in the 1960s had carried out a study of 'ghetto culture' and community (1969), later criticized this approach arguing that the problem-centred studies had produced a fragmented view of the city (Hannerz 1980). Anthropologists' failure to bring together the various pieces of the 'mosaic' constituted, he suggested, a major limitation of urban research (1980). In an earlier publication, Fox (1977) had similarly argued that by focusing on specific groups, anthropologists were producing a fragmentary picture of urban reality (see also Wayne and Kemper eds 1978).Years later, Leith Mullings (1987) criticized the way in which urban anthropology had developed in the US, and yet her work (Mullings 1997) and that of other North American scholars (see, for example, Susser 1982) continued to struggle in getting away from an analysis in terms of urban 'mosaic', focusing on such issues as poverty, ethnicity and gender. These contemporary scholars appear, however, to be motivated by a different kind of applied interest; specifically, that of the 'engaged' anthropologist. The applied-oriented approach of many US anthropologists to their own society should not be surprising for, as Marcus and Fischer have noted, they have always had 'domestic interests'. Their 'exotic subjects' have traditionally been American Indians, urban migrants and immigrants (Marcus and Fischer 1986: 112).

As we have indicated, for a long time, and in contrast with their US and to a lesser extent European colleagues (for instance, French and especially Scandinavian), British anthropologists regarded the study of their own society as 'poor man's anthropology, … as neither testing, nor serious scholarship' (A.P. Cohen 1986: 15). At most, we have seen, they turned their attention to Irish and Celtic societies (somehow depicted as 'colonies') or to European (mainly Mediterranean) peasants; in particular, Mediterranean anthropology was seen as anthropologists' second-best enterprise. These communities were regarded as 'remote' enough to be considered 'fit' for anthropological study (see Ardner 1987), which nicely met the belief that only distance, especially semantic distance, could lend 'enhancement, if not enchantment, to the anthropological vision' (Ardner 1987: 38). Eventually, a clear acknowledgment was made of the need to study a specific social unit – being it a village, the town or a larger city – in relation to the macro-processes that influence, and are influenced by, local dynamics.

Keeping in mind that most of this debate turned a blind eye to European cities, evolving around research carried out in villages, it is not surprising that by the mid-1980s only a few ethnographies had been produced on urban Europe by Anglophone anthropologists; fewer still had been integrated in major debates. Notably, most of these monographs failed to provide a holistic analysis, focusing on narrow topics, such as the West Indian London Carnival (Cohen 1980), political ideologies and representation of immigrants in France (Grillo, 1985), working class political relations in Italy (Kertzer 1980), social historical study of industrial élite in Spain (McDonogh 1986). Moreover, the aforementioned debate continued to ignore what urban ethnographies there were, for the aim was not to stimulate urban research but to develop an informed criticism of the structural-functionalist paradigm. Such a debate ended up proposing an

anthropology of 'complex', nation-state societies, focusing on issues such as bureaucracy, nationalism, religious and political ideologies, gender and ethnic relations.

The Diversification of Urban Anthropology

The 1980s saw the publication of a large number of urban ethnographies. In an article published in 1990, Sanjek reviewed urban ethnographies spanning over the five continents, looking at the issues that caught the anthropologists' attention, but also at the topics that were neglected. As he pointed out, urban anthropology found itself competing with other 'anthropologies' – applied, environmental, medical, educational, aesthetic, 'of development', 'of gender' – that were developing alongside more traditional subfields, such as political, economic, religion, kinship and a sub-section of legal anthropology (specifically, legal pluralism). As Sanjek noted, 'urban anthropology in 1980 was arguably the narrowest and theoretically least influential of all this brood' (Sanjek 1990: 151).

Significantly, however, a new trend emerged in the USA, where anthropologists started to 'study up', examining such topics as the dynamics of inherited wealth (G. Marcus 1980) and Congressional patronage and ritual (Wheatherford 1985). At the same time, renewed interest in single-subject issues led to research on the elderly, ethnic minority and new migrants, gender (particularly feminist-oriented) and education (e.g., Susser 1982, Foner 1987, Harrison 1989, Jones and Turner 1989). Special attention was paid to ethnic and religious identities, and to ethnic relations. In the article cited above, Sanjek pointed out that much of this research continued to be neighbourhood-based. Elsewhere, the empirical study of local dynamics was linked to broader historical and international processes. For instance, ethnographies on the Middle East addressed the Israeli-Arab conflict, looking at the influence of religious education in political processes (Fischer 1980), the significance of ethnic demographic movement (Shokeid and Dresden 1982) and historical processes of nation-state formation (Aronoff ed. 1986) in relation to significant external factors.

Ethnographies of African societies continued, in part, to reflect traditional interests, such as kinship, social organization and labour migration; some moved on to new grounds, examining, for instance, the dramaturgy of power, the relationship between status symbolism and Masonic lodges (Cohen 1981), the emergence of new indigenous leaders (W. MacGaffey 1983) and entrepreneurialism (J. MacGaffey 1987). A growing field was also brought out by ethnographies on the role of women in economic activities (Obbo 1980, Cock 1980). Work, class and gender, along with town symbolism and urban planning, and 'urban' religion, were also major topics of urban anthropological research in Asia, a trend exemplified by the work of Holmstrom (1985) on organized and unorganized industrial sectors in India, of Smart (1989) on street hawkers in Hong Kong, of Gates (1987) on Chinese working class in Taiwan, of Bestor (1989) on market place and social organization in Tokyo, of Robinson (1986) on the political economy of development in Indonesia and of the volume edited by Nas (1986) on Indonesian cities. Many studies linked gender to work issues and migration (Ong 1987 and Sharma 1986; Trager 1988), and middle-

class and élite Hindu women (Caplan 1985) and upward mobility (Srinivas 1984); still others looked at 'sex tourism' (Phongpaichit 1982) and at the culture of *geisha* professional entertainers (Dalby 1983), while demographic policies and the different position of women in urban and rural areas became the object of ethnographies on China (Wolf 1985). Religious studies varied from analyses of the work of Braham priests (Fuller 1984) to analyses of the relationship between class and religion (Lewandowski 1980), 'new religions' in Japan (Davis 1980), Islamic revival (Nagata 1982, 1984; Nakamura 1983), the clash between religious institutions and legal colonial institutions (Appadurai 1981) and the complexity raised by the ethnography of the ancient pilgrimage city of Banaras (Parry 1994).

Also in the case of Asian ethnographies, most of the literature, perhaps with the exception of the studies on sex tourism and on joint corporate ventures, was concerned with internal changes, often overlooking external influences. Urban ethnographies on Latin America addressed housing, urban restructuring and new settlements at the urban peripheries (e.g., Lobo 1983, Logan 1984, Holston 1989), or focused on economic policies, women workers, local politics and religion (see, for example, Chaney and Castro, 1989, on women factory workers and market traders; Safa, 1986, on informality and state policy; Bank and Doimo, 1989 on social movements). Many studies on Latin America were influenced by sociological works, such as Castells's *The Cities and the Grassroots* (1983).

Urban research in Europe appeared to be more geographically diversified. In Britain urban research mainly focused on ethnic groups, especially on Commonwealth immigrants (Burghart 1987, Cohen 1981, Wallman 1984, Werbner 1986). Exceptions to this trend were represented by such works as that of Mars (1982) on workplace crime, Harris (1986) on power relations in industry and Finnegan (1989) on hidden musicians. A few studies were carried out in Southern Europe and almost none in Eastern Europe. Although research in South Europe continued to be circumscribed to the Mediterraneanist tradition and its limitations (Pardo and Prato 2010), refreshing theoretical approaches began to emerge, as exemplified by the work of Murphy (1983) on generational change in Seville and Pardo (1989) on the relationship between religious beliefs and practices and social dynamics in Italy, while urban France attracted the attention of both British (Grillo 1985) and native anthropologists (among them, Zonabend 1981 and Segalen 1985). Interestingly, Sweden was the country where most urban research was carried out in continental Europe, addressing also ethnic issues and focusing on welfare institutions, class and culture.

We must point out that, although based on urban ethnographies, most of the aforementioned publications were not presented as 'urban anthropology'. Many were identified, instead, as studies in the anthropology of religion and of thought, economic anthropology, gender, political anthropology, material culture, environmental anthropology and so on. Opposition to urban anthropology was still predominant in the mainstream academic world and, as we shall see, it took some time and effort for anthropological research in the urban West, and particularly in Europe, to develop and achieve recognition.

Methodology and Methods: The Development of Classic Anthropological Research in the Western City

Throughout the 1970s, it became obvious to many that the increasing number of urban anthropological studies had brought about the need to redefine the disciplinary paradigm methodologically and theoretically. In particular, the post-war and post-colonial situation had generated a critical rethinking of anthropology, of its scope and methods and of its object of study (see, e.g., Ansari and Nas eds 1983). Research interests became more diversified. At the same time, the study of social change and the influence of Marxism led to criticism of the dominant functionalist paradigm.

Many anthropologists, who from a different perspective questioned the validity of the study of alleged 'isolated' and 'autonomous' communities, began to cast their ethnographies in a wider context. It was the beginning of a new methodological approach in the discipline as a whole. Anthropologists became increasingly concerned with the relationship between micro-processes (at community level) and macro-processes (at regional and national level). Such an approach and interests were, however, only partially reflected in urban research. The limited debate that followed the publication of European urban ethnographies continued to be marred by the – unsubstantiated – argument that a classical anthropological study of Western urban settings could not be done.

In the 1980s, two key issues were addressed. On the one hand, anthropologists asked whether the classical methodological apparatus, developed specifically for the study of village and tribal communities, could be applied to larger, more 'complex' settings. On the other hand, methodological problems were raised by the perceived danger of interdisciplinarity. Undeniably, anthropologists found it increasingly difficult to define their field of study, for global changes forced them to take into account data that were academically 'allocated' to other social sciences and to the humanities; in particular, sociology, political science, economy and history. The main concern was how to apply the traditional anthropological methodology to more 'complex' (Western and non-Western) societies and, where adaptations were needed, how to avoid losing disciplinary identity – questions, we must note, raised by Banton (1966) two decades earlier.

Having said that urban anthropology has been heavily influenced by sociology, it should also be said that initially, and of course unsurprisingly, the taken-for-granted distinct separation of the two disciplines' fields of study ('primitive' societies and 'exotic' communities, on the hand, and 'complex', mainly Western societies, on the other) did not bring about disciplinary insecurity. All was well regarding data collection too for, broadly speaking, the two disciplines adopted different research methods. Sociologists would normally study large population samples, using mainly quantitative and statistical data, surveys, structured interviews and so on, whereas anthropologists essentially carried out long-term qualitative research based on the in-depth ethnographic study of a community through participant observation, collecting data through a

combination of field techniques such as note-taking, open interviews, case-studies of significant people and situations, audio and visual recording and so on. Traditionally, the ethnographic method allowed anthropologists to focus on a specific topic while remaining holistic in their analyses. The spatial complexity of the urban field undoubtedly presented a challenge in this respect, as anthropologists were increasingly faced with the need to design their research in such a way as to broaden their scope; ethnographic methods needed, therefore, expanding. Many, we know, circumvented such a complexity by setting specific boundaries in defining the target population and limiting their study to neighbourhoods (spatial boundaries), ethnic minorities (cultural boundaries), or target groups that were confined by gender or work boundaries. As anthropological research in urban areas increased, there was, however, the risk that the distinction between the two disciplines would become blurred.

While sociologists became increasingly interested in the ethnographic method (e.g., Gans 1967), anthropologists such as Sandra Wallman doubted the applicability of participant observation in urban areas, which eventually translated into an advocacy for new methods and for an 'anthropology by proxy' (Wallman et al. 1982). In her research in London, published under the title *Eight London Households* (1984), she applied research methods borrowed from other disciplines. This soon turned out to be a major limit of such otherwise stimulating work, which pointed to the relevance of analysing 'resources' such as time, information and identity in understanding inner-city Londoners.

For a while, Wallman's methodological stance appeared to play the perverse role of justifying the objection that (classic) anthropology could not be done *in* the Western Industrial city. So, for a while, the danger of this subfield being dismissed altogether was clear and present. However, in the mid-1980s Pardo's research on death in Naples (1989) and, then, his doctoral research convincingly proved that not only was participant observation possible, but also that its combination with an adaptation of Wallman's techniques in the construction of case studies produced good results and that a holistic study in the anthropological tradition could successfully be done in urban Europe (Pardo 1996; see also 2012 on the academic and intellectual complexity of that time). A key aspect of Pardo's work in Naples is its focus on the agency-system relationship, which led to a critical analysis of the categorical oppositions typical of both the Functionalist and the Marxist perspectives. Demonstrating the analytical and theoretical relevance of in-depth empirically-based research, Pardo drew on his detailed ethnography to develop a sophisticated framework urging anthropologists to address the sociological significance of 'strong continuous interaction' (Pardo 1996: 11-12) between the material and the non-material, of long-term goals and immediate returns – taking into account the significance of morality, rationality and values in people's choices and strategies – and of the link between micro- and macro-level analysis. New urban research followed thereof on the interactions between economic, political and cultural aspects, which contextualized local dynamics and change in national and global historical processes (Prato 1993, 2000, 2009). Others (see, for example, Spyridakis 2006 and 2010) have taken on such an approach looking at the relationships between

local and national processes and policies of global restructuring that fundamentally influence the local reality and people's everyday life. While recognizing the usefulness of data collected through non classical anthropological methods, these works continued to draw on the traditional ethnographic methodology. As testified by the works cited above and by an increasing number of others (such as, for example, Armstrong 1998, Gill 2000 and 2001, Bardhoshi 2010, Lindsay 2011, Mollica 2012, Engebresten 2012), long-term field research in a specific site is a *sine qua non*; participant observation and in-depth case-studies are made possible by the 'fine gained daily interactions' (Falzon 2009) and the relations of trust established with local people (Pardo 2000 and 2001).

Attention to the relationship between micro- and macro-processes should not be confused with the methodological arguments that, in the 1990s, questioned the validity of traditional fieldwork. This is the case, for example, of the kind of a 'multi-sited' ethnography proposed by scholars like George F. Marcus. Having argued that many contemporary social phenomena – such as globalization and transnationalism – could not be accounted for by focusing on a contained space, Marcus (1995) suggested that anthropologists should study the 'connections between places' (Falzon 2009: 5). A major criticism of this approach is that, in their ambition to develop a holistic understanding of supra-local processes of globalization and transnationalism, post-modernist advocates of multi-sited ethnography have often produced 'thin', superficial ethnographic accounts, to the detriment of an in-depth understanding and analysis of the local reality (on this debate, see, for example, Falzon ed. 2009). Furthermore, Hannerz (2009) has rightly questioned the novelty of this kind of multi-sited approach, arguing that, in the mid- and late-twentieth century, all too often new fashions and vocabularies have been presented as innovation. The Marxist and post-modernist critical stance of this new generation of anthropologists towards the past of the discipline not only led to questioning the validity of traditional fieldwork but, as Hannerz notes, also produced a 'mass-amnesia' in the wider academic community. Since the dawn of the discipline anthropologists have carried out fieldwork not just from the veranda and have engaged in some form of 'multi-sited' investigation. More recently, as Pardo's work shows (see, for example, 1996 and 2012), anthropological research carried out applying traditional methodology, while based in a specific urban area, offer an empirical understanding of the broader context and of the attendant sociological connections through the ethnographic study of local people's links throughout the rest of the city and beyond. Pardo makes it quite clear, and in fine detail, how, as a participant observer, he 'followed' his informants in their dealings within and without the neighbourhood, thus providing an in-depth, articulated understanding of the ways in which local people relate to the wider social, economic and political system that stimulated a correspondingly complex analytical and theoretical effort. Similarly, Seligmann's study (2004-2012) of street vendors in urban Peru shows that multi-sited fieldwork has played a fundamental role in tracking intertwined micro-, meso- and macro-processes in the Andean economy. These are just two examples of the kind of multi-sited ethnography that at once offers an in-depth understanding of how people relate to the wider

system beyond their neighbourhood and workplace and links nicely the analysis of micro-processes to the complexity of macro-level influences. In this specific sense, 'multi-sited' fieldwork proves to be useful (see also Mollica 2012, Parry 2012, Prato 2012 and Giordano 2012).

A significant aspect in the study of the relationship between micro- and macro-levels is the conceptual and analytical distinction between place and space. Such a distinction has become significant in urban research as cities have been increasingly regarded as 'places' that take a specific significance for the resident; they are argued to be more than physical spaces in so far as their social forms give meaning to 'who we are'. Thus, cities have been addressed as places of meaning and identity. For some scholars (see, for example, Orun and Chen 2003), conceptualizing the city as a place becomes particularly significant when cities are studied in relation to external global forces. Although the global economy may transform cities, their specific identity comes to light when they are analysed as places of meaning. Thus, despite new attempts at classifying city types (e.g., Low ed. 1999), it would be misleading to apply the same analytical parameters to such diverse cities as such as New York, Tokyo, London, Paris, Shanghai or Chicago; these, like others, may well be described as 'global cities' (in the sense given by Sassen 1991) but their empirical study brings out the indisputable fact that cities 'vary from one epoch to another, and from one society to another' (Orun and Chen 2003: viii).

New Developments in Anthropological Urban Research: Cities in the Global Context
Since the 1990s, urban anthropological research has variously recognized the ways in which regional diversity (cultural, social, economic and political) affects urban life. Anthropologists have paid attention to: a) a rethinking of theories of urbanization and patterns of urban growth; b) different patterns of urban social interaction and urban conflict in traditionally multi-ethnic states and 'multicultural' processes in Western cities; c) the ways in which people in different regions and under different political regimes respond and adapt to the demand of global policies (e.g., developing countries, post-socialist countries, post-industrial settings); d) the visibility and relevance of urban research, and anthropology generally, in the broader society.

To expand on a key point, apart from inviting criticism *à la* Leach to which we have referred earlier, attempts to provide a theorization of cities by categorizing them into sacred, ethnic, gendered, global, informal, traditional, contested cities and so on, raise the obvious question, how can one group under the same category cities such as, for example, Jerusalem, Banares and Rome or Hindu and Islamic cities? These are all 'sacred cities', they are however fundamentally different and such a difference needs to be recognized and appropriately addressed. Similarly, we should ask whether the 'spatialization of culture' occurs in the same way in Costa Rica and in Vienna (Rotenberg and McDonogheds 1993), or whether 'class struggle' and gender solidarity have the same meaning and follow the same pattern in New York City (Rosenzweig and Blackmar 1992) and in Barcelona (and Kaplan 1992). While comparative analysis may well yield enlightening insights (see, for example, Monge 2010, Krase 2012), it is

critical to recognize that each of these cities have different history and different meanings for its inhabitants (whether they are new immigrants or old residents); that they are marked by diverse economic and social conditions and that they belong to different political systems which, despite global and transnational processes, inevitably affect a wide range of urban policies.

The diversity of cities is reflected in recent works on migration, such as the volume edited by Glick Schiller and Çaglar (2011) on the interrelationship between migrants and cities, with particular reference to the 'rescaling' of cities. Looking at the relationship between locality and globality, including historical transnationalism linked to labour migration, the volume aims to show how the ways in which migrants of different backgrounds establish themselves in cities and their contribution to urban restructuring are affected by the different political, economic and social conditions of the host cities (See also contributions in Prato ed. 2009).

It goes without saying that the works mentioned thus far, and those that follow, are by no means exhaustive of the research carried out in the urban anthropological field. They represent major trends that have developed throughout the years and they show the extent to which *Urban Anthropology* has changed over the years.

Among the issues that have caught the attention of urban anthropologists in the 1990s and at the beginning of the twenty-first century are industrial relations (Harris 1986; Parry, Breman and Kapadiaeds 1999; Spyridakis 2006); social marginality (for example, Bourgois 2002 and 2003 [1995], Pardo 2009, Perlman 2011); the sociological significance of kinship in social relations (Pardo 1996, Donner 2008); citizenship, the relationship between ordinary people and their rulers and the legitimacy of governance (Holston ed. 1999, Pardo 2000 and 2001, Prato 2000, Gill 2000 and 2001, Zhang 2002, Bray 2005, Sam Hickey and Diana Mitlineds 2009, Pardo and Prato eds 2010); religion and modernity (Parry 2008); political ideologies and urban planning (Bray 2005, Colombijn 2006); gender issues (Harrison 1991; El-Kholy 2002, Engebretsen 2012); violence and conflict (Armstrong 1998, Caldeira 2000, Sant-Cassia 2000, Colombijn and Lindbandeds 2002, Mollica 2010), also addressing movements of resistance (Holston 2008, Gledhill and Schell 2012); the problems raised by the growing movement of population and multiculturalism (Ong and Nonini 1997, Feldman-Bianco 2001, Zhang 2001, Erdentug and Colombijn eds 2002, Prato ed. 2009, Nagle 2009, Weingrod 2010, Krase 2012); legitimating processes of state formation and ethno-nationalistic revival (Rubel and Rossman 2009, Weingrod 2006), urban symbolism (Jezernik ed. 1999, Nas and Samuels eds 2006), the cultural meaning and use of urban space (Rotenberg and McDonogheds 1993, Makhulu 2002), environmental issues (Prato 1993, Aoyagi et al. eds 1995, Torsello 2012).

The activities of the *Commission on Urban Anthropology* have reflected the breadth of these new interests, often stimulating new research and acting as a springboard for debate on methodological and theoretical issues (see, Prato and Pardo eds 2010 and eds 2012). Following the collapse of Communism, there has been a renewed interest in Eastern and South-Eastern European cities, linking them to global geopolitical processes (see, for example, Prato 2004 and 2012, Thiessen 2007 and 2012, Bardhoshi 2010). Several publications of the *Commission*'s

members have demonstrated the validity of interdisciplinary debate, addressing the connection between micro- and macro-processes and, crucially, the importance of empirically-based analysis and of the need to link theoretical speculation to empirical evidence. Ethnographically global, the Series *Urban Anthropology* established by Ashgate in 2007 meets precisely this trend, encouraging the publication of original, empirically based works that address key issues of comparative value in the current international academic and political debates. The first of its kind to be established by a major academic publisher, the Series includes works on the methodological challenges posed by urban field research; the role of kinship, family and social relations; the gap between citizenship and governance; the legitimacy of policy and the law; the relationships between the legal, the semi-legal and the illegal in the economic and political fields; the role of conflicting moralities across the social, cultural and political spectra; the problems raised by internal and international migration; the informal sector of the economy and its complex relationships with the formal sector and the law; the impact of the process of globalization on the local level and the significance of local dynamics in the global context; urban development, sustainability and global restructuring; conflict and competition within and between cities. Together with the aforementioned CUA journal *Urbanities*, the Series is part of an effort to stimulate fresh ideas and forward-looking analyses on the problems and complexity of our urban environment in today's global set up.

Conclusions: Human Mobility, Diversity and the Contemporary Relevance of Urban Research

In this concluding section we need to point out that, since the 1990s, most anthropologists prefer to define their field of study as anthropological research in urban settings, rather than 'urban anthropology'. This methodological and theoretical stance reflects a shift in focus from the community studies inspired by the 'urban ecology' model of the Chicago School and processes of urbanization in post-colonial societies to political economy, city planning, the legitimacy of grassroots action and of governance, the relationship between the local and the supralocal and their significance to urban dynamics.

Today anthropologists are concerned with a healthy variety of topics, including the multifaceted analytical challenge posed by the process of globalization (cultural, economic, political), biotechnology and bioethics, new reproductive technologies, the problematic of human rights, new forms of exclusion (including spatial segregation), legitimacy and governance, and so on. The early twenty-first-century situation appears to be marked by the re-emergence of localism, transnationalism and by the effects of the ill-fated political project of multiculturalism. In such a situation, the city stands out as a crucial arena in which citizenship – and, by extension, identity and belonging, the democratic process and human and civil rights – are constantly renegotiated (see Appadurai and Holston 1999, Prato 2006) and the morality of law and politics are increasingly questioned and scrutinized (see Pardo ed. 2000 and 2004).

As in the twenty-first century the world continues to grow urbanized, urban dynamics are increasingly central to global processes. At the same time, globalization and the contemporary scale of human mobility (virtual, through communication, and actual, through geographical movements) affects significantly, and in different ways, the social spectrum. Anthropology remains fundamental to our understanding of these processes for it offers a unique, empirically-based approach to studying both the micro-level in its broader context and the effects that global processes have on the life of the single individual and of whole communities.

Cities are hubs of cultural and ethnic interaction as well as challenging settings for future sustainable development. In studying the complexity of the world in which we live, interdisciplinary work – in the sense of cooperation and exchange of research findings – has proved to be of critical importance in gaining an informed, adequately articulated understanding of human beings and society; at the same time, it is *a sine qua non* to avoid the disciplinary fragmentation risked in the 1980s. True, the complexity of life somehow compels anthropologists to specialize in a specific field; however, there is absolutely no need for such a complexity to translate into academic complication and disciplinary insecurity. Bearing in mind that the a great part of the world population lives in cities and that urbanization will inevitably grow further, it could be argued that contemporary urban anthropology *is* Anthropology. Urban research can definitely contribute to achieving the kind of holistic understanding on which the discipline is based.

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COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

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The survey provided by Giuliana Prato and Italo Pardo is an extremely useful history and orientation of urban anthropology as a subject and an institution. I will offer three comments, one leading into the other. The first is, from my perspective as an anthropologist of China, to make good an omission from their survey. The second is to note some that much anthropology impinges on and is relevant to 'urban anthropology'. The third is to broach the problem of what might the theoretical object of urban anthropology be, in order to judge whether or when such other anthropological topics are part of it.

The omission is the work of the anthropologist G. William Skinner, first on marketing and administrative hierarchies in imperial China and their transformation in the process of modernisation (1964), second on the city in late imperial China (1977). Skinner combined historical documentary research with geography (principally central place theory) and demography in his anthropology of cities as parts of regional systems in China. His studies did not rely on a typology, but had empirically to distinguish between two kinds of hierarchy, that of the nested hierarchy of administrative cities in a centralised state and that of the ramified hierarchies of central places of social and economic interaction leading from the centres of standard market areas through greater areas and their central cities up to regional economies, each region with its city cores and remote peripheries. These were systems of the co-variation of variables of population density, mortality rates, spheres of inter-marriage, mediation and élites, increasing specialisation of occupation, and accumulation of wealth. Transport and topography are the keys to the formation of these hierarchies, whose formation could be traced from the first great commercialisation of the Chinese economy and the emergence of cities with populations of one million or more in the 9th-11th centuries until the twentieth century when road, rail and steamship reduced the intermediate levels of the central place hierarchy. Skinner's (1977) *The City in Late Imperial China* is one of three volumes on the city in China that he and his close colleagues, Mark Elvin and John B. Lewis edited. The chapters in them covered their internal social, economic and political institutions and culture, adding these to Skinner's regional analyses. They did not seek to demonstrate a uniquely Chinese quality in contradistinction to colonial biases as in the anthropology of Indian cities. Instead they offered studies of Chinese cities in critical response to classical urban sociologists and for comparison, which may indeed have indicated peculiarly Chinese characteristics. Unfortunately they were never taken up by anthropologists of other parts of the world. Nevertheless, they exemplify first a spatial approach and second an historical anthropology of cities, their emergence and transformation.

An even longer-term historical anthropology of cities is of course that which relies on archaeology, a curious omission from 'Urban anthropology'. It raises one of the issues confronting the anthropology of cities, which is to question the old equation of state, city and civilisation.

At the other end of the long-term historical view, the anthropology of industrialisation and work relations, including those of agro-industry, is an entirely distinct topic from the anthropology of the urban, though the two may of course overlap. Prato and Pardo only partially acknowledge this because they want to claim anything that is in 'cities' for 'urban anthropology'. For both, capitalist relations of production may well be a common denominator, but that does not make them the same anthropological topic. This brings me to a smaller omission from their survey but one that raises a big question.

It is the article by Liu Xin (2002) on the emergence of a so-called urban anthropology in and of China, which questions whether there is a theoretical object at stake. In the course of this important article he brings into question the whole of urban anthropology. Before coming back to this question, I want to draw attention to something that Prato and Pardo write at the beginning of their conclusions: 'most anthropologists prefer to define their field of study as anthropological research in urban settings, rather than "urban anthropology"' (p. 18). Previously in their survey they take this as a slight upon 'urban anthropology' or an avoidance that they take to be based on scorn. To me, it seems to be quite natural and no slight to urban anthropology that, as the world's population increasingly resides in cities, all anthropological and sociological topics are continued in urban settings. That they are often situated in city settings does not make them – for instance the anthropology of kinship or of religion – urban anthropology.

When extension of those topics begins, as it often does, to bring to notice how the topic is affected by urban residence, only then do we begin to note or at least to face the challenge of saying something about the urban as such. So, for instance, we are driven to ask what and why do family and kinship relations change under conditions of residence in cities. Raymond Firth's and his colleagues' studies of families in London did ask whether there was something specific about family life in London, as later Sandra Wallman did. But those changes are as much or more to do with changed sources of income, information from mass media, women's work, or everything placed under the imprecise label of modernisation as a world revolution, first systematically outlined by the sociologist William Goode in 1963. As Chinese studies have shown, these changes in kinship and family form are general, not just urban.

So, can we be more specific in designating the urban as an object of anthropological or sociological study? Like so many others have done, Liu Xin refers us to Henri Lefebvre's conception of capitalist production of space, a specific political economy of spatial formation that is the 'urban' of our times. Liu Xin notes that a spatialisation of social relations has taken place with the market reforms and the kind of state-led capitalism that has occurred in China and has generated the greatest urban expansion over the last thirty years. And he adds that with this spatialisation has also come a new temporality of short-term presents. It is aided by the

technology of mobile phones, social media and the financialisation of capitalist economies. But for me at least this is still not specific enough. I think that here the contrast of the urban, or at least the modern urban, with the rural can help. The contrast draws attention to the physicality of urban spaces, or of light pollution obscuring the sky and the phases of the moon, of the urban nature of seasons and daily rhythms of life. They give a clue as well as an empirical object lesson to the specificity of the urban. Living among strangers and the freedoms and problems of anonymity and anomie are classical and still relevant. But to them we should add the paths made and mapped in the different experiences of the same urban spaces, the ways the same spaces are centred on different points of significance as places of refuge, gathering and danger for different urban dwellers in their daily or weekly trajectories. Concatenations of these everyday practices and trajectories are the spatial stuff of urban spatiality and temporality. The physicality of policing of these spatial gatherings and dispersals and their links to nodes of transport is an obvious and tellingly specific subject for urban anthropology, exemplified by Julie Kleinman's study of the Gare du Nord in Paris (2012).

Prato and Pardo themselves point to another specifically urban topic: 'new forms of exclusion (including spatial segregation), legitimacy and governance' (p. 18). As another indication of such critical and specifically urban anthropology, I would add the counterpart to spatial segregation and urban governance, which is urban planning, both as a temporality and as part of the process of spatial formation. It is a never-ending, future-oriented but never completed and always both constructive sometimes utopian but also destructive process dogged by contingencies, a definition of legitimacy that literally marginalises and creates illegitimacy at its margins. A classic study of this specifically urban topic is *Berlin, Alexanderplatz* by Gisa Weszkalnys (2010).

With these clues I leave open to fellow anthropologists the specification of 'urban' as an object of anthropological theory and therefore empirical study, a question that the essay by Prato and Pardo inevitably provokes.

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This excellent account by Prato and Pardo of the historical developments that underlie the dynamic of the current state of urban anthropology is a good starting point for moving forward. The theoretical innovations that have emerged from urban anthropology are, as they conclude, becoming a driver for anthropological innovation.

One of the difficulties in this story that Prato and Pardo relate is how long it has taken anthropologists to come to grips with fulfilling the mission of anthropology to describe and conceptualise urban social formations in a way that relates external holistic viewpoints to the composite holographic views of individual people. Each person experiences an urban place differently but in a manner partially compatible with others, a compatibility that increases or decreases depending on the extent to which they share pathways, networks and experiences. People construct a composite of cities and places, communities and groups in cities that is their own. Even at the level of communities, there is only partial agreement between direct neighbours about the boundaries of the composite of the community each holds (Henig 2012, Fischer 1994). This likewise applies to social networks, where the aperture on the network for each person in the network reveals a different conception of the whole of the network (White and Johansen 2004).

In villages anthropologists can imagine they are chipping away at these issues by use of brute force in detailed accounts of peoples' perceptions and conceptions; they can work with almost everyone they think relevant to a particular case study. Thus they feel they have related individual experiences to the 'reality' of the situation. In urban contexts it is clear one has to use samples in the form of cases studies, surveys and selective participant observation. The best one can do is to collect fragments of experience, social relations and the city itself.

One of the reasons that more anthropologists may be amenable to urban anthropology, in addition to the prevalence of urban population that Prato and Pardo allude to, is that one outcome of the past thirty years of social and cultural anthropology is the acknowledgement that even village life is far more complex in ways not before imagined. This was the initial stimulation for

the formal recognition of 'multi-sited' ethnography (Marcus 1995), which as Prato and Pardo note has informally always been a part of fieldwork. But most anthropologists need different skills than those developed for simpler times. They require quantitative skills useful for evaluating results within samples, and for many these remain an anathema. Simple but powerful forms of data collection and analysis based on social networks will be critical.

The need to acquire an urban perspective and use this to address the phenomena of day to day life will become even more apparent as the current revolution in ubiquitous communications results in new forms of social organisation and social life that resemble much more those of urban contexts than the village. Recently, social computing has greatly changed the capacity for establishing social networks. Initially, groups that existed primarily online were termed 'virtual', with the imputation that they were unlikely to have a major impact on social organisation. This was clearly miscalculated, as groups that are organised around mainly online contact are a major resource for many, particularly younger, people. Part of the reason for the misapprehension of the significance of online groups is common also for the consideration of more traditional networks. If each network is viewed as a single network, some – apparently organised around a single interest or need – appear relatively insubstantial. But people are members of many such groups, and where these groups in part overlap, either directly or indirectly, they become more significant. That is, when members of one network can be presented as resources through another network, the two networks in part extend each other beyond the immediate corporate relationships of given egos in the networks. Single principle networks are likely to have a large number of people come into and leave these, but as other networks become partially integrated these networks will become more resilient and robust.

An individual's economic and social circumstances change throughout their lifetime, and more radically in urban environments. Drivers of change include physical changes in locales and the roles of locales within the city and changes in the overall infrastructure and economic circumstances that emerge from urban formations. But at an individual level there are many drivers that relate to changes in age, skills, knowledge, experience, social networks, health and cultural interpretations of the individual interacting with these. This has several consequences. People must develop new adaptive strategies for their entire life as both circumstances around them change together with the changes that arise from their personal development as they enter different culturally recognised phases of life. Much of this will come through learning, mostly intra-generational learning, as people incorporate adaptive strategies from others around them in similar circumstances. But people are not just buffeted in the stream of life, adapting to circumstances imposed on them. An important adaptive strategy is to change the circumstances somewhat rather than simply change to adapt to circumstances; e.g. adapt the circumstances to oneself rather than simply adapt to the circumstances, which Fischer has referred to as adaptive agency (Fischer 2008); that is, the capacity to change the options available and to actualise these as viable choices. Some of this can be done at a personal level, but often this requires cooperation with others. Social networks are, thus, an important aspect of instantiating adaptive agency.

Traditionally, most of them include the corporate network relative to a given ego, the set of people one has a direct and personal connection with, and an extended group, which includes the union of the corporate groups of all members of the network. Thus, social networks enable access to resources and influence far beyond the immediate members of one's network.

Some foresee the decline of the cities as socio-economic and cultural entities, since online communications replace face to face communication and substitute sources of information and knowledge such as libraries or even economic activities such as stores or business meetings. This is unlikely. Urban centres appear to benefit from inclusivity and diversity, and online networks greatly enhance the capacity of individuals to include views and effort from others. Technological advances are used as complementary and as facilitators to face-to-face interaction (Hall 1999, Gaspar and Glaeser 1998). These new technologies attribute increased significance and value to places through 'opening up' places to a net-based world audience and by enhancing the specific and unique character of each locale through provision of direct comparators. The connection of people with places acquires new meaning in present times, where the sense of place is rapidly being displaced and altered by new technologies (Malpas 2008).

An anthropology based on this approach aims not only at developing an understanding of collective constructions of knowledge but also at locating changes and investigating what drives changes and makes them effective. The goal is to develop a greater capacity for agency on the part of urban dwellers by increasing both an awareness of the available options and the skills and knowledge needed to convert these options into genuine choices.

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This well-constructed, excellently written essay is likely to establish itself as *the* definitive statement on the subject. It covers the existing literature in a comprehensive way and presents cogent arguments for its criticisms and conclusions. Prato and Pardo deal with the paradox that urban research has included 'significant contributions from anthropologists and yet mainstream anthropologists have long been reluctant to recognize industrial urban settings as legitimate fields of enquiry'. The roots of this attitude are traced to the ways in which the two disciplines of sociology and social anthropology developed and diverged from the late nineteenth century. An 'unquestioned academic division' was created between these disciplines so that 'folk' societies and 'urban societies' were opposed as ideal types. Prato and Pardo trace the ways in which this rigid division began to break down in North American studies, but they argue that British Anthropologists, approaching the 'urban' through focusing on the development of South/Central African mining towns, dependant on migrant labour, assumed that urban research should deal essentially with the processes of social transformation of the immigrant worker. This did lead to the development of new research methods, particularly to the focusing on networks of social relations rather than on the structure of groups, but virtually precluded the study by anthropologists of 'the urban' in Europe, as opposed to studies of aspects of urban ethnography arising out of a continuing interest in rural-urban migration. Prato and Pardo nevertheless stress that such studies laid the foundation of the development of urban anthropology.

The 1970s saw an interesting development in British 'urban' anthropology in that work on Indian cities pointed up the contrast between them and the essentially Colonial model that formed the African towns that were the previous focus of study. And this was a development that led to a realisation that urban phenomena should be contextualized in the global system rather than seen essentially as mere subordinate units in distinct centralised states. Trenchantly, moreover, the sheer physical fact that in the post-colonial era the anthropologist was unwelcome, or ill funded, or both, turned the attention of British anthropologists to 'anthropology at home'. This did not immediately lead to a focus on the urban. There was a digression through the Mediterranean world, essentially seen as composed of rural communities studied independently of the national context. And when the urban was studied 'the Western metropolis constituted a breeding field of the society's problems.' The city was a mosaic in which each piece presented different problems, to be studied separately.

Prato and Pardo show how, from this time, although there were many studies of what might be called aspects of urban anthropology, in urban anthropology as such there was precious

little interest. There was, however, a new methodological approach to the discipline (of anthropology) as a whole; instead of the concentration on 'isolated' communities, there was increasing concern with the relationship between micro-processes and macro-processes– the regional and the national. The common attitude seemed to be, however, that a classical anthropological study of Western urban settings was impossible. The contrary view rested on the belief that even in extremely complex urban environments, the quintessential anthropological tool of participant observation, the ethnographic method, allows anthropologists to focus on a specific topic while remaining holistic in their analyses. In short, it permits the study of the links between micro- and macro-level analyses in ways that expose the fallacies of Marxist and post-modernist fashions that seek to rubbish fieldwork as a tool for urban studies. The participant observer who follows the informant through the city demonstrates the local people's links through the city and beyond.

Prato and Pardo argue that since the 1990s urban anthropological research has recognised the various ways in which regional diversity affects urban life. Fresh ideas have been stimulated and there have been forward-looking analyses on the problems and complexity of urban environments in today's global set up.

As Pardo and Prato note, most anthropologists prefer to define their field of study as anthropological research in urban settings rather than 'urban anthropology'. They argue that in the early twenty-first century the City stands out as a crucial arena in which citizenship, identity and belonging, the democratic process and human and civil rights are constantly renegotiated, and the morality of law and politics are increasingly questioned. Above all they argue that 'Anthropology remains fundamental to our understanding of these processes for it offers a unique, empirically based approach to studying both the micro-level in its broader context and the effects that global processes have on the life of the single individual and of whole communities.'

So I end where I began. This is an exceptional essay and I believe it will become a core text for students of urban anthropology.

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Prato and Pardo offer a remarkably useful and comprehensive overview of the emergence of a distinctive subfield of urban anthropology. Following hints of nervousness on their own part about such an enterprise, and building on Hirschon's (1989: 233) much earlier and trenchant critique, however, I would like to dissolve the category of urban anthropology into a shared concern with what constitutes good anthropological method. We clearly agree on recognizing ethnography as the discipline's diagnostic methodology and in rejecting efforts to exchange intensive fieldwork for other methods. The latter stance parallels a growing discomfort with the

expropriation of the term 'ethnography' by scholars unwilling to invest in it the time and intense dedication that our version requires. This recognition of ethnography's distinctiveness transcends any urban-rural distinction. Silverman's (1975) study of an Umbrian rural community, for example, was a study of the urban (and urbane) ideal known in Italian as *civiltà*, while my discussion of the same phenomenon in the Italian capital was designed in part to demonstrate how so historically important a city could be considered culturally marginal precisely for its inhabitants' tendency to pit (socially and morally) civil against (politically and ethically) civic values (Herzfeld 2009). In tackling a city that vaunts its own seemingly paradoxical marginality, moreover, was I departing so far from the preoccupations of earlier generations of anthropologists?

While it may be true that 'urban anthropology' may have sprung from a desire to find the exotic in the familiar, much as Davis (1977: 7) argued was the case for the anthropology of the Mediterranean, that parallel – heralded by the Kenny and Kertzer (1983) volume on Mediterranean urban life – is instructive. The conceptualization of a Mediterranean cultural area, characterized in part by a complex and historically deep urban-rural engagement, long ignored the political implications of its genesis. Does the triumphal emergence of a distinctive urban anthropologist not signal a disturbingly similar tendency to ignore peasant and tribal groups precisely because they are now minority concerns and fading demographically?

Where Prato and Pardo and I converge is in insisting that ethnographic methods should not be sacrificed to the new expansion. If the work done in cities is not ethnographic, why should we claim it as anthropological? But what, then, is ethnography? I would argue that it characteristically rests on the demonstrated achievement of *intimate relations with informants*, regardless of the kind of site involved (multiple, local, linear, or even electronic); that this requires protracted and often repeated stays 'in the field' to experience in person what Pardo calls 'strong continuous interaction'; and that its success is revealed through the anthropologist's writerly skills at depicting minute details as expressing encompassing social and political processes. The several works on Naples, including Pardo's (see also Schneider and Schneider 2003, on Palermo), that describe the various ingenious ways of fixing problems are redolent of wine, sweat, music, and fear. Because there is simply too much information in what any good ethnographer brings home, the ability to use sensuous description to convey that encompassing nexus of social relations and cultural values is what makes the writing sing – and inform. I would argue, furthermore, that 'engaged anthropology' does not usually motivate the foray into urban work, but emerges from the realization – as I did for me in both Rome and Bangkok – that academic research addresses real problems, sometimes galvanizing our consciences more urgently than we could have imagined in the safety of an academic office (see Herzfeld 2010).

If many distinguished studies were not presented as urban anthropology, as Prato and Pardo correctly remind us, why now force them into a mould that suppresses precisely the richness of the conceptual context from which they draw their significance? The achievement that

these and other authors can claim is not that of having created a new subfield, but rather that of having done good ethnography against the often daunting odds created by urban settings.

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At a recent intensive and intellectually stimulating seminar, 'Placing Urban Anthropology: Synchronic and Diachronic Reflections', held at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, participants rigorously examined the significance of the classic, but not 'classical', anthropological paradigm in urban research as well as its value to society in general. Much of the conversation that took place was framed by the challenging ideas presented by Prato and Pardo in several of their works but especially in their recent essay 'Urban Anthropology'. I should preface my comments that follow with a rather ideological statement about the current state of affairs in many social sciences that are challenged by post-modern, post-structural and cultural studies critiques. The boundaries and borders between disciplines, even between newly created, and already nearly extinct inter-disciplines, have become so porous that in some academic circles it is difficult use terms such as 'anthropology' or 'sociology', without protestation, in conversation. Similar has been the devaluation of science, even merely as an attitude, or, even more troubling, the denial of its value by defining it as just another neocolonial enterprise.

On the other hand, has been the 'conservative backlash' of denigrating of new modes of scholarly expression such as auto-ethnography and less than classical versions of participant-or

similar observation/ethnography. One can recognize the need for self-reflection without devaluing its honest practice; after all, it can be said that the original ideology of anthropology as other social sciences was a rather pragmatic humanism. I favour the largest tent for those who seek to understand the social worlds in which we live.

The question, 'Can anthropology be practiced in the city?' might be replaced with 'Ought anthropology be practiced in the city or elsewhere?'. In their essay, Prato and Pardo address, among other things, the complex relationship between the sister disciplines of sociology and anthropology. In this regard, they present a concise description of the unfortunate, perhaps 'orphaned' development of urban anthropology that placed it for a time outside of the Pale of mainstream anthropological research and writing. I believe Prato and Pardo correctly locate the source of this historical diversion in a naive interpretation of the Functionalist Paradigms in both Anthropology and Sociology that I have also experienced in my own interdisciplinary writing and research. The misinterpretation was most simply that Anthropology was only, or best, suited for the study of primitive, traditional, or at most modern but rural or small town communities. By almost ignoring cities, except as an implied end of a spectrum or the other half of an overwrought dichotomy, a kind of scholarly self-marginalization was produced. Fortunately, a significant number of social scientists trained in anthropological field methods, such as ethnography and participant-observation, found the increasing urbanization of societies around the globe of sufficient interest to pursue its study. In the process, over several generations they assembled a substantial body of research that made it possible for anthropologists confidently 'to define their field of study as anthropological research in urban settings, rather than "urban anthropology".' (Prato and Pardo). It is this radical shift in disciplinary perspective that has made it possible for contemporary anthropologists to engage with a multitude of newer approaches to the study of urban dynamics including political economy and urbanization in post-colonial societies. I would add that it is this shift that helps maintain the relevance of anthropology and anthropologists today.

Within their argument for 'Urban Anthropology', Prato and Pardo deftly interweave a wide spectrum of anthropological methods and theoretical approaches. These range from the more or less classical study of 'urban villagers' to how the anthropological paradigm itself can make significant contributions to the study of the city-as-a-whole as well as its smaller integral parts. They offer 'empirically-based anthropological analysis' as a tool for understanding of our increasingly urban world.

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The essay on the scope, meaning, history and development of urban anthropology by Italo Pardo and Giuliana Prato is both comprehensive and informative. They have traced the theoretical developments of the subject, critically assessed the conceptual issues as well as given a fairly detailed account of the works done in this field over the past few decades. There are however a few expected omissions. For example the authors' review is rather Eurocentric, although they have accounted for some works done in South Asia, Africa and South America. It is never possible for any scholar to cover every aspect with equal competence and in this comment I wish to elaborate a little on the South Asian urban studies as well as raise a couple of conceptual issues regarding the way in which the 'urban' can be understood from a slightly different platform.

In South Asia, the major impediment to a dichotomous view of urban vs. rural, as was initially the case in the West especially when it came to observing the European rural/urban societies, was the continuity of institutions such as caste and kinship across the various forms of settlements. The ground realities of Indian society even today reflect very much the predominance of kinship ties and family/caste values where people related to each other may be spread not only across the rural/urban divide but across the globe as well. While referring to the Mediterranean ethnography, the authors have commented that rural areas were seen as insulated from the urban, but in India, scholars like Redfield (see Singer 1976) and Mc Kim Marriot (1955) had talked about 'horizontal' relationships of caste and kinship that bound the rural with urban societies and with each other at the same level. The interface of the concept of civilization with that of the urban and the rural becomes interesting in this context as in old centres of civilization like South Asia (Singer 1972), institutions cut across the rural /urban divides. In South Asia urban studies have thus often focused on kinship and caste like those by Vatuk (1972) and Channa (1979), Mines (2002), Seymour (1999) to name a few. Thus although distinctions have been made among South Asian urban societies that emphasize the more 'traditional' (orthogenetic [Redfield and Singer 1954] or 'sacred' [Parry 2012]) and more 'modern' or 'industrial'(Parry 2012) or 'heterogenetic' (Redfield and Singer 1954) with differing levels and character of sociability, the absence of caste and kinship ties is not a feature of any social group in India (for the non-Hindus also kinship-like clan and lineages are important and some also follow caste-like divisions). Thus even at a more generalized level, urban society cannot be seen so 'impersonalised' that existing social and political set-ups including sacred elements cease to operate; deep-rooted social and cultural elements, and their political ramifications, are evident in the way in which resources and space are distributed in urban areas and in which urban dwellers live their lives.

This brings us to the theoretical perspective of comprehending the urban from a phenomenological platform as a 'lived space'. This issue has been left somewhat un-attended by

the authors; particularly the concept of 'built space' and important works like that of Setha Low (1995, 2000). In this perspective the internal differentiations of the 'urban' space become important especially in the division of the domestic and the public. Here also one needs to take into account the 'urban' not merely as a cultural phenomenon and 'way of life' but also in terms of its physical structure, architecture, infrastructure and so on. Urban architecture is continuous with its history and also its economic and political aspects.

The physical dimensions of the city is not separate from its cultural dimensions, for example living in apartment buildings may affect social life in different ways, depending upon which part of the world we are talking about. For example, while such living in high rise buildings may lead to anonymity in a city like New York, in India, even in a metropolitan city like Delhi, the residents tend to form kinship- and family-like collectivities where sharing and co-operation and participation in common rituals and festivities is common. But again people who live in the same apartment complex often tend to reproduce community, class and caste ties that may set them apart from other groups. An apartment complex, by its very ability to put people in close physical proximity with each other, may reproduce 'collectivities' or exaggerated anonymity, depending on the context.

Thus one must agree with the authors that 'new urban research' must comprehensively take into account the 'interactions between economic, political and cultural aspects', and the urban situation needs to be contextualized within the larger global, national and state backgrounds within which they occur. The urban is not a uniformly comprehended space and there are likely to be greatly differentiated internal divisions. The cognitive aspects of urban life will thus be conditioned by the platform from which it is being viewed and in the same region one find have different interpretations and 'pictures' of the urban.

With their stimulating essay the authors have initiated a lively debate that *Urbanities* can carry forward successfully.

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Prato and Pardo confront the community of 'urban anthropologists' with a major dilemma concerning their professional identity: What are the terms of their fieldwork sites, their subjects of research, the theories and the methodology which distinguish their project from other contemporary anthropologists? Although post-colonial anthropology uprooted its practitioners from the rural sites of their professional birthplace, they seem to have carried on their tools and interests, based mostly in the craft of community studies, into the main scene of western social research – the urban environment, the hitherto monopoly of sociologists. True, they had some earlier experience studying the first stages of urbanization in Africa in particular (for example, the copper belt new towns in Zambia). However, as Prato and Pardo report, the Manchester-school pioneering urban ethnographies from Africa were a natural extension of the tribal scene. Thus, the first steps taken by a younger generation of anthropologists in western urban societies resembled the old genre, namely, studying bounded neighbourhoods, 'urban villages', presenting minorities of various shared social, ethnic, economic backgrounds (e.g. Hannerz' seminal *Soulside* 1969). But, as succinctly claimed by Sanjek (1990: 151), in time, the strictly 'urban anthropology' endeavour proved the narrowest line of anthropological contemporary production compared with the more theoretically rigorous and clearly defined fields of research such as the family, medical, political, economic, religious, legal and other anthropologies.

I will not continue presenting Prato and Pardo's enormous project introducing the wide spectrum of studies and theoretical discourse that continued to dominate the field, its critiques and defenders. The predicament of urban anthropologists was recently raised again in a *City & Society* special issue (Barker, Harms and Lindqist 2013, no. 2). For example: 'While urban settings offer attractive sites to explore broader, structural relations of power, how can the "deep hanging out" of a lone ethnographer yield compelling analysis of these broader social dynamics?' (Ibid.: 166).

Although adopting a simplistic approach, I will introduce my own take on the venture and identity of an urban anthropologist. I believe my personal experience represents a common story among other practitioners of my generation.

I started my career as a Manchester School graduate, conducting eighteen months fieldwork in a farming community of Atlas Mountains Jewish immigrants in the Israeli semi-arid Negev (Shokeid 1971/ 1986). However, my next fieldwork project was among the Arab minority left in a Jaffa neighbourhood (now part of Tel Aviv) after the 1948 war*'s nakba* left them separated from the majority of its Arab native population (Shokeid and Deshen 1982). 'Naturally', I considered myself since then an urban anthropologist. Although conducting participant observations on a more limited daily schedule compared with my full time engagement among the Moroccan villagers, nevertheless, I was employing my old school methodology, 'the extended case method' in particular. Moreover, my interest in both the rural and urban fields were of a similar sociological pursuit: among the Moroccan Jews, the adjustment of 'Third World' immigrants to a modern farming technology and to a western communal model of organization, and among the Arabs in Jaffa, their adjustment to a radically changed world under the Israeli regime, the loss of their community, the imposition of Jewish-western culture, the relationships with Jewish neighbours, and so on.

My next project took me to New York studying Israeli emigrants in the Borough of Queens (Shokeid 1988). No doubt, the circumstances of fieldwork in metropolitan New York have changed dramatically compared with my situation in Jaffa, but basically the goals and methods have not been transformed. I concentrated with an 'ethnic' group residing within the borders of a large ethnically mixed suburb. The leading research questions were mostly the same as before: how these Israeli born immigrants adjusted economically, socially and culturally away from home.

My major query at this point: implementing a similar professional agenda and methodology, moving on from the Negev village to Jaffa and later to Queens, have I achieved or failed the promise of a modern differentiated sub-discipline of 'urban anthropology'?

However, conducting my next projects also in New York, it seemed I was 'liberated' at last from the 'classical community study' model of research. I moved into a novel field of social relationships no longer regulated mostly by the rules of ethnicity, similar social-economic circumstances and close residence, but prescribed by one major personal source of the participants' identity – their shared sexual orientation.

My first step out of the mould engaged me in the study of a gay synagogue in Greenwich Village (Shokeid 1995/ 2003) recruiting its congregants from all parts of New York City and nearby neighbourhoods. Though 'Jewish', they represented a mixed crowd of American born citizens, nostalgic of a cultural tradition, but mostly expressing their sexual identity *communitas* shared with other gay-lesbian participants in various religious and secular organizations in New York City. I moved on to study a services centre also in Greenwich Village catering to a wide and heterogeneous constituency of LGBT participants. I conducted observations among its kaleidoscope of voluntary associations and other activities (e.g. Shokeid 2002).

I end my 'story' responding to Prato and Pardo's search of the raison d'être, the theoretical construction, the methodology and the agenda of urban anthropology versus that of other contemporary anthropologies. I consider myself an urban anthropologist because I engage in research of various facets of social behaviour and cultural presentations unique to city life. I mention in this context Bech's assertion about the unique conditions, the gains and pains of gay life in the city: 'The city with its crowds and mutual strangers, is the place where the homosexual can come together with others; and – at the same time and for the same reasons – it is the place that confirms his loneliness' (1997: 98). No doubt, the specific sites I observed could be chosen for research projects from other major sub-disciplinarian perspectives, such as, ethnicity, religion or sexuality. However, gay congregations and LGBT services centres have emerged mostly in metropolitan cities. Ethnic enclaves of legal and illegal immigrants, as much as present day waves of refugees, develop mostly in major cities (I am presently observing the growing concentration of many thousands of refugees from Eritrea in downtown Tel Aviv). Although I conducted my observations in New York sites, nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to confirm that my reports represent similar sites in other major American cities. For example, most gay organizations I observed are part of national networks. However, I believe my ethnographies contributed no less to various specific sub-fields under the umbrella of anthropology.

In conclusion, my choice of field sites was not instructed by the orientation of a scholar specializing in ethnic, religious or gay studies. I was drawn to these social aggregations and 'cultures' generated and developed under the unique circumstances of the urban environment. It was rather a product of the same old drive to observe and report about the human condition and social life in 'other' cultures that has triggered the emergence of the art of anthropology. In my experience, the city of today represents the African continent that absorbed the energy and imagination of my teachers in Manchester before the proliferation of specialized sub-fields. I accept the stigmatic verdict of nourishing an eclectic, naive taste for urban social 'exotica'.

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Giuliana Prato and Italo Pardo's excellent essay is a genuine tour-de-force. Elegantly written, their critical review of Urban Anthropology presents not only a global view of the field's development, but also presses ahead to present new challenges in understanding the changing nature of 'urbanism as a way of life'. On behalf of all of us, Bravo!

As they correctly emphasize, many anthropologists study important issues that take place in cities, but too few give attention to the more fundamental problems thrust upon urban people by the very nature of living in cities. This means not just studying social complexity and the absence (or presence) of community, not only examining urban anomie and disorganization (or organization), but also, following Pardo, analysing the broken links between citizenship and 'the legitimacy of governance' and other fundamental urban issues. Two Examples: the possibility of living a meaningful life in The Metropolis; the consequences of an absence of 'traditions' in urban worlds that are remade every few years. We are in need of new formulations, different slants of analysis that will better explore the dilemmas inherent in urbanism.

Prato and Pardo also examine the methodological problems involved in doing anthropological field work in cities, and they consider strategies to overcome these (team research, 'multi-sited' studies). There is a new development on the horizon that is worth recognizing.

The era of 'Big-Data' (or as it is sometimes called, 'hyperdata') is upon us. The computing giants have accessed zillions of data-bits about everything and everyone, and the applied mathematicians have now produced logarithms that presumably are able to locate 'patterns' within this gigantic mass-mess. Imagine what this means for studying people in cities, where everything from land registration to parking tickets to shopping for tomatoes (and on and on) can be tabulated and calculated. Given the technology, we can anticipate an outpouring of sociological-historical research reporting on 'newfound patterns' in urban life across the globe.

Why do I bring this up now? New research formats often capture public attention and become fashionable, and 'Big Data' is more than on the horizon. My point is that while such research can sometimes be illuminating, it does not replace anthropological field research. In fact, it makes long-term field studies even more vital and important. What actually is taking place in cities of whatever size is best understood by exploring how particular people interact and lead their lives in very specific urban contexts.

Placing Urban Anthropology: Synchronic and Diachronic Reflections
International Conference, University of Fribourg, September 2013

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Last September a round-table Conference on *Placing Urban Anthropology: Synchronic and Diachronic Reflections* took place at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Inspired by the publication of *Anthropology in the City: Methodology and Theory* (I. Pardo and G. B. Prato eds, 2012, Ashgate Series 'Urban Anthropology'), the Conference was convened by Wolfgang Kaltenbacher, Italo Pardo and Giuliana B. Prato and was organized by the Department of Social Anthropology of the University of Fribourg with the financial support of the Swiss National Foundation and the Rectorate of the University of Fribourg. The thirteen participants, ten paper-givers and three discussants — Andrea Boscoboinik, Edward Conte and Helen Hertz — debated the state of the art of urban ethnographic research, diachronically and comparatively, and the potential for methodological and theoretical development in the shared awareness of the unique contribution that ethnography offers for a better theoretical as well as practical grasp of our rapidly changing and increasingly complex cities. The structured contributions by a strong field of anthropologists, two sociologists and a philosopher, and the intense discussion offered an important opportunity to develop a detailed examination of the significance of the anthropological paradigm in urban research, its centrality both to mainstream academic debates and to society more broadly and the potential for development of this field of research.

Today half of humanity is living in urban settings and that proportion is expected to increase in the coming decades. Cities are identified as hubs of cultural and ethnic interaction as well as challenging settings for future sustainable development. Clearly, studying urban settings and the attendant complex dynamics is timely and of great importance. Field research in anthropology is an 'art of the possible', and in cities there are many possibilities. Combined with specific research objectives, the application of ethnographic methodology leads to a great variety of approaches and to new paradigmatic challenges.

Undeniably, today anthropologists find it increasingly difficult to define their field of study, for global changes force them to take into account data that traditionally are academically

'allocated' to other social sciences and to the humanities; in particular, sociology, political science, economy and history. The main concern is how to apply the traditional anthropological methodology to contemporary Western and non-Western societies and, where adaptations are needed, how to avoid losing disciplinary identity. Of course, like cultures, scientific disciplines are not static. They are dynamic entities, continuously changing and developing. They alter their identity, though they always do have an identity. Thus, new collaborations arise, widening the field of interdisciplinary research; and yet, there is no interdisciplinarity without disciplinarity. In studying the complexity of the world in which we live, interdisciplinary work — in the sense of cooperation and exchange of research findings — is undoubtedly of critical importance in gaining an informed, adequately articulated understanding of human beings and society. Participants in this Conference engaged with the argument that, although the complexity of life somehow compels anthropologists to specialise in a specific field, there is absolutely no need for such a complexity to translate into academic complication and disciplinary insecurity. Specifically, new approaches in urban ethnography have recognizable stature and profile.

The empirically-based analyses developed by Subhadra Channa (University of Delhi. *Critical Reflections on the Cognitive Dimension of 'Being Urban' in the Global Context: The Case of India*); Vytis Čiubrinskas (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania, *New Lithuanian immigrants in Urban Chicago: Networks, Livelihoods and Loyalties*); Paola De Vivo (University of Naples Federico II, *The Debate in Urban Anthropology and the Development of Empirical Investigation on Governance*); Christian Giordano (University of Fribourg, *Investigating Multiculturalism in the City: Anthropological Insights from Southeast Asia*); Wolfgang Kaltenbacher (Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici,Naples, Italy, *Facing New Clusters: Methodological and Epistemological Reflections on Anthropological Research in Urban Areas*); Jerome Krase (Brooklyn College, City University, New York, *Visual Ethnography: Bridging the Gaps*); Italo Pardo (University of Kent, U.K.. *Italian Elite Groups at Work: Views from the Urban Grassroots*); Giuliana B. Prato (University of Kent, U. K., *Polis, Civitas and Metropolis: An Anthropologist's Reflections*); Michel Rautenberg (University Jean Monnet, Saint-Étienne, France, *Cities, (Re)generators, Tombs or Social Heritages and Social Memories? Urbanity as Heritage of Cities*); François Ruegg (University of Fribourg, Switzerland, *'Nouveaux Riches' in and Around the City: An Aspect of Urban Transformation in Eastern and Central Europe*) stimulated epistemological reflections on the state of the art of urban ethnographic research, on the prospected impact of this field on anthropology in general and on the relations of anthropology with other disciplines and with the broader society.

Revised versions of the individual papers, incorporating key aspects of the round-table discussions, are now in preparation for publication in a Special Issue of the international Journal *Diogène/Diogenes*, a quarterly publication published under the auspices of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies with the support of the UNESCO. It is hoped that further expansion of this debate will generate a volume to be published in the forthcoming Series 'Palgrave Studies in Urban Anthropology'.

Welcome Address

International Conference on
Placing Urban Anthropology: Synchronic and Diachronic Reflections

Guido Vergauwen

(Rector, University of Fribourg, Switzerland)

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear guests,
It is my pleasure, as Rector of the University of Fribourg, to welcome you to this international conference. Since its very beginnings – 125 years ago – Fribourg University has understood itself not just as a local Swiss institution but as an academic institution with an eminently international character and outlook – a full university in which humanities and natural sciences, law and economics, medicine and theology do not simply live together in the same administrative structure, but in which they collaborate in order to create an habit of mind and an intellectual culture. In his lectures on the Idea of a University, John Henry Newman spoke about the practical end of university courses: 'it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world … a University training aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind … at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life'. Our university has been faithful to this idea of liberal education, contributing at the same time to the development of scientific investigation and the expansion of knowledge in all the fields of arts and science.

Since 1939, Ethnology and Social Anthropology have been part of the teaching and research activity of our University. At that time, in the methodological perspective of cultural history in the tradition of the *Wienerschule* (The Vienna School), Professor Wilhelm Schmidt initiated courses titled *Ethnologie und Menschheitsgeschichte* (Ethnology and History of Humanity), '*Anfänge der menschlichen Gesellschaft - Familie und Staat* (The Beginnings of Human Society- The Family and the State) and *Überblick über die Völker und Sprachen der Erde und die sie berührenden Probleme* (Overview of the Peoples and Languages of the World and the Problems Affecting Them). No less than 200 persons attended his inaugural lecture – in spite of the cantonal minister of education's view that 'a small University' did not need a 'discipline of minor importance such as ethnology'. In its further methodological development towards social anthropology, this disciplinary domain has kept its basic orientation, putting at the centre of its concern the human being, culture and society – with a strong orientation towards Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia, in close collaboration with political and religious sciences. Professors Giordano and Ruegg have successfully developed the field of social anthropology, which is now a substantial part of the Faculty of Humanities, offering in a bilingual setup and collaborating, among others, to an MA in 'Culture, Politics and Religion in a Pluralist Society'. Cultural

diversity and social identities are part of the large scope of their research and teaching – for which I would like to congratulate and thank my two colleagues on this occasion.

I do not have the ambition to deliver a substantial scientific contribution to the very rich program of your conference. And since we are waiting for the *Apéritif riche*, you rightly expect richness other than the words of a Rector. I do not want to test your patience – allow me, though, to add two personal thoughts which came to mind as I reflected upon the fascinating topic of this conference.

First, according to biblical mythology it is not the town, the urban condition, which is the natural environment of humanity but the garden – the peaceful dwelling in harmony with a non-aggressive nature. The town is linked with the condition of a 'lost paradise', with the struggle for life, the search for protection within an environment which has become aggressive. I am always impressed by the negative connotations the biblical tradition gives to towns. In this sense, towns are *refuges in times of war* or even places in which murderers can take sanctuary. There is a mysterious link between town and homicide. The first city is situated 'east of Eden' – it was built by Cain after he murdered his brother Abel. The building of cities can be an expression of a claim for the concentration of power and the arrogance of mankind: 'Come, they said, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and make a name for ourselves; or we shall be dispersed all over the earth' (Gen 11, 4). Even Jerusalem, the biblical epitome of a city, does not escape this negative understanding of the urban condition. It is the city 'that murders the prophets and stones the messengers sent to her' (Mt 23, 37). This contrasts with the true and new Jerusalem – the city of peace, a mother for people from every race (Ps 87, 5), which refers to the heavenly Jerusalem, where the negative sides of the urban condition are healed: no more suffering, no more tears, no more danger – 'the gates of the city shall never be shut' (Revelation 22, 24).

Second, in its political philosophy, Greece has developed a less dramatic understanding of the urban condition of humanity. The *polis* is born out of the naturally given fact that no-one can exist in a self-sufficient, autarchic way. Everyone is called to contribute, according to their talents and at the right time, to the practical organization of life. *Polis* is a form of life – a Lebensform. In this sense, the *polis* precedes, as it were, the individual person; it offers the possibility, and the right condition, for the individual actor to realize his or her aims in conformity with his or her qualities. For Plato this ideal and just way of life is not guaranteed by a single or a collective power but by knowledge – embodied by the king-philosopher. Aristotle emphasizes that, when it comes to organize education, subsistence and the economy, the urban condition should be ruled and organized through the freedom of those who accept the predominance, and the attendant direction, of reason. I am always impressed by the fact that Aristotle insists on the importance of friendship in the organization of the *polis*; where 'friends' are people who are willing to live and to act together. *Polis* as an ethical way of living together in an organized society also implies the *logos*, which is at once reason and speech. Valuable, I think, in today's world too, reason and speech enable us to survive as human beings in changing urban conditions. Let me quote

Aristotle (Politics 1253a): 'For nature, as we declare, does nothing without purpose; and man alone of the animals possesses speech. The mere voice, it is true, can indicate pain and pleasure, and therefore is possessed by the other animals as well (for their nature has been developed so far as to have sensations of what is painful and pleasant and to indicate those sensations to one another), but speech is designed to indicate the advantageous and the harmful, and therefore also the right and the wrong; for it is the special property of man in distinction from the other animals that he alone has perception of good and bad and right and wrong and the other moral qualities, and it is partnership in these things that makes a household and a city-state' (*poiei oikian kai polin*).

I wish you a good conference.